or a prodrug, a *N*-oxide, an addition salt, a quaternary amine or a stereochemically isomeric form thereof wherein

$R^1$ is hydrogen, $C_{1-6}$alkyl, halo, formyl, carboxyl, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl, $C_{1-6}$alkylcarbonyl, $N(R^3R^4)C(=O)$-, $N(R^3R^4)C(=O)N(R^5)$-, ethenyl substituted with carboxyl or $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl, or $C_{1-6}$alkyl substituted with hydroxy, carboxyl, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxy, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl, $N(R^3R^4)C(=O)$-, $C_{1-6}$alkylC(=O)$N(R^5)$-, $C_{1-6}$alkylS(=O)$_2N(R^5)$- or $N(R^3R^4)C(=O)N(R^5)$-;

wherein each $R^3$ and each $R^4$ independently are hydrogen or $C_{1-4}$alkyl;

$R^5$ is hydrogen or hydroxy;

$R^2$ is hydrogen, $C_{1-6}$alkyl, hydroxy$C_{1-6}$alkyl, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxy$C_{1-6}$alkyl, $N(R^3R^4)C(=O)$-, aryl or halo;

n is 1 or 2;

-A-B- represents a bivalent radical of formula

| | |
|---|---|
| -Y-CH=CH- | (a-1); |
| -CH=CH-Y- | (a-2); or |
| -CH=CH-CH=CH- | (a-3); |

wherein each hydrogen atom in the radicals (a-1) to (a-3) may independently be replaced by $R^6$ wherein $R^6$ is selected from $C_{1-6}$alkyl, halo, hydroxy, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxy, ethenyl substituted with carboxyl or $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl, hydroxy$C_{1-6}$alkyl, formyl, carboxyl or hydroxycarbonyl$C_{1-6}$alkyl;

each Y independently is a bivalent radical of formula -O-, -S- or -$NR^7$-;

wherein $R^7$ is hydrogen, $C_{1-6}$alkyl or $C_{1-6}$alkylcarbonyl;

Z is a bivalent radical of formula

| | |
|---|---|
| -$(CH_2)_p$- | (b-1), |
| -CH=CH- | (b-2), |
| -$CH_2$-CHOH- | (b-3), |
| -$CH_2$-O- | (b-4), |
| -$CH_2$-C(=O)- | (b-5), or |
| -$CH_2$-C(=NOH)- | (b-6), |

with the proviso that the bivalent radicals (b-3), (b-4), (b-5) and (b-6) are connected to the nitrogen of the imidazole ring via their -$CH_2$- moiety;

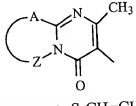
wherein p is 1, 2, 3 or 4;

L is hydrogen; $C_{1-6}$alkyl; $C_{2-6}$alkenyl; $C_{1-6}$alkylcarbonyl; $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl; $C_{1-6}$alkyl substituted with one or more substituents each independently selected from hydroxy, carboxyl, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxy, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl, aryl, aryloxy, cyano or $R^8HN$- wherein $R^8$ is hydrogen, $C_{1-6}$alkyl, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl, $C_{1-6}$alkylcarbonyl; or

L represents a radical of formula

-Alk-Y-Het$^1$ (c-1),
-Alk-NH-CO-Het$^2$ (c-2) or
-Alk-Het$^3$ (c-3) ; wherein

Alk represents $C_{1-4}$alkanediyl ;
Y represents O, S or NH ;
Het$^1$ and Het$^2$ each represent furanyl, tetrahydrofuranyl, thienyl, oxazolyl, thiazolyl or imidazolyl each optionally substituted with one or two $C_{1-4}$alkyl substituents; pyrrolyl or pyrazolyl optionally substituted with formyl, hydroxy$C_{1-4}$alkyl, hydroxycarbonyl, $C_{1-4}$alkyloxycarbonyl or with one or two $C_{1-4}$alkyl substituents; thiadiazolyl or oxadiazolyl optionally substituted with amino or $C_{1-4}$alkyl; pyridinyl, pyrimidinyl, pyrazinyl or pyridazinyl each optionally substituted with $C_{1-4}$alkyl, $C_{1-4}$alkyloxy, amino, hydroxy or halo; and
Het$^3$ represents furanyl, tetrahydrofuranyl, thienyl, oxazolyl, thiazolyl or imidazolyl each optionally substituted with one or two $C_{1-4}$alkyl substituents; pyrrolyl or pyrazolyl optionally substituted with formyl, hydroxy$C_{1-4}$alkyl, hydroxycarbonyl, $C_{1-4}$alkyloxycarbonyl or with one or two $C_{1-4}$alkyl substituents; thiadiazolyl or oxadiazolyl optionally substituted with amino or $C_{1-4}$alkyl; pyridinyl, pyrimidinyl, pyrazinyl or pyridazinyl each optionally substituted with $C_{1-4}$alkyl, $C_{1-4}$alkyloxy, amino, hydroxy, halo, 4,5-dihydro-5-oxo-1H-tetrazolyl substituted with $C_{1-4}$alkyl, 2-oxo-3-oxazolidinyl, 2,3-dihydro-2-oxo-1H-benzimidazol-1-yl or a radical of formula




wherein

A-Z represents S-CH=CH, S-$CH_2$-$CH_2$, S-$CH_2$-$CH_2$-$CH_2$, CH=CH-CH=CH, or $CH_2$-$CH_2$-$CH_2$-$CH_2$;
aryl is phenyl or phenyl substituted with 1, 2 or 3 substituents each independently selected from halo, hydroxy, $C_{1-4}$alkyl, polyhalo$C_{1-4}$alkyl, cyano, aminocarbonyl, $C_{1-4}$alkyloxy or polyhalo$C_{1-4}$alkyloxy;
with the proviso that 5,6-dihydrospiro[imidazo[1,2-b][3]benzazepine-11[11*H*],4'-piperidine] and pharmaceutically acceptable addition salts thereof are not included.

4. (Amended) A compound according to claim 1 wherein -A-B- is a bivalent radical of formula -CH=CH-CH=CH- (a-3) or –CH=CH-Y- (a-2).

5. (Amended) A compound according to claim 1 wherein Z is $-(CH_2)_p-$ (b-1), -CH=CH- (b-2), or $-CH_2-O-$ (b-4).

6. (Amended) A compound according to claim 1, wherein L is hydrogen, $C_{1-6}$alkyl, hydroxy$C_{1-6}$alkyl, carboxy$C_{1-6}$alkyl, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl, or $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl$C_{1-6}$alkyl.

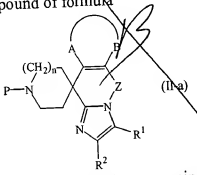
7. (Amended) A compound according to claim 1 wherein $R^1$ is hydroxy$C_{1-6}$alkyl, formyl, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxycarbonyl, $C_{1-6}$alkyloxy$C_{1-6}$alkyl, $N(R^3R^4)C(=O)-$, halo or hydrogen.

8. (Amended) A compound according to claim 1 wherein the compound is
5,6-dihydrospiro[11*H*-imidazo[2,1-b][3]benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine]-3-carboxamide dihydrochloride;
1'-butyl-5,6-dihydrospiro[imidazo[2,1-b] [3] benzazepine-11-[11*H*],4'-piperidine];
6,11-dihydro-1'-methylspiro[5*H*-imidazo[2,1-b][3]benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine] cyclohexylsulfamate(1:2);
6,11-dihydrospiro[5-imidazo[2,1-b][3]benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine]-3-methanol] (E)-2-butenedioate (2:1);
3-chloro-6,11-dihydrospiro[5*H*-imidazo[2,1-b][3]benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine] (E)-2-butenedioate (1:1);
6,11-dihydro-3-(methoxymethyl)spiro[5*H*-imidazo[2,1-b][3]benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine]. (E)-2-butenedioate (1:1);
6,11-dihydro-1'-(2-hydroxyethyl)spiro[5*H*-imidazo[2,1-b][3]benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine]-3-carboxamide;
6,11-dihydro-1'-methylspiro[5*H*-imidazo[2,1-b][3]benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine]-3-carboxamide monohydrate;
ethyl 3-(aminocarbonyl)-6,11-dihydro-α-phenylspiro[5*H*-imidazo[2,1-b][3]benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine]-1'-propanoate monohydrochloride;
3-(aminocarbonyl)-6,11-dihydrospiro[5*H*-imidazo[2,1-b][3]-benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine]-1'-carboxylate;
spiro[10*H*-imidazo[1,2-a]thieno[3,2-d]azepine-10,4'-piperidine];
6,11-dihydrospiro[5*H*-imidazo[2,1-b][3]benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine]-2,3-dicarboxamide dihydrochloride monohydrate; or
a prodrug, a *N*-oxide, an addition salt, a quaternary amine or a stereochemically isomeric form thereof.

10. (Amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, and as active ingredient a therapeutically effective amount of a compound as defined in claim 1.

11. (Amended) A process of preparing a composition as claimed in claim 10, wherein a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier is mixed with a therapeutically effective amount of a compound as defined in claim 1.

12. (Amended) A compound of formula

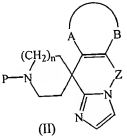


(II-a)

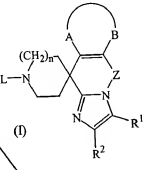
or a *N*-oxide, an addition salt, a quaternary amine or a stereochemically isomeric form thereof wherein P is a protective group and n, -A-B-, Z, $R^1$ and $R^2$ are defined as in claim 1, with the proviso that 6,11-dihydro-1'-(phenylmethyl)-5*H*-spiro[imidazo[1,2-b][3]-benzazepine-11,4'-piperidine] (E)-2-butenedioate(1:2) is not included .

14. (Amended) A process of preparing a compound as claimed in claim 1, comprising

a) deprotecting an intermediate of formula (II), followed optionally by derivatizing either the piperidine moiety, or the imidazole moiety, or both the piperidine moiety and the imidazole moiety



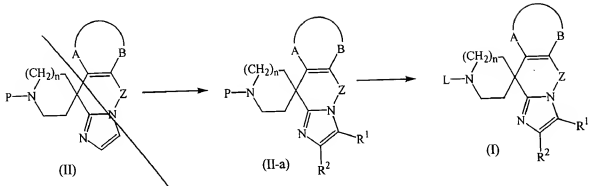
(II)



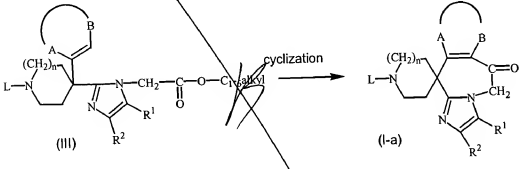
(I)

with P being a protective group;

b) derivatizing an intermediate of formula (II) at the imidazole moiety, to form an intermediate of formula (II-a), followed by deprotecting the piperidine moiety, and followed optionally by derivatizing the piperidine moiety

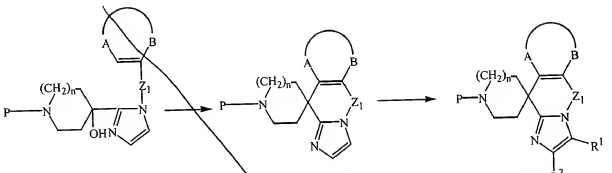



c) cyclizing an intermediate of formula (III) in the presence of an appropriate acid, to form a compound of formula (I-a)




and, optionally, converting compounds of formula (I) and (I-a) into each other, and further, optionally, converting the compounds of formula (I), into a therapeutically active non-toxic acid addition salt by treatment with an acid, or into a therapeutically active non-toxic base addition salt by treatment with a base, or converting the acid addition salt form into the free base by treatment with alkali, or converting the base addition salt into the free acid by treatment with acid; and, optionally, preparing stereochemically isomeric forms or N-oxide forms thereof.

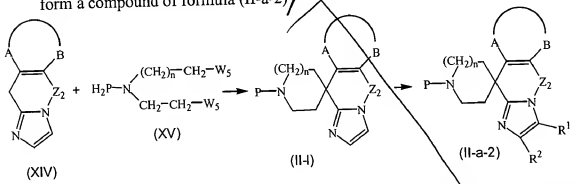
15. (Amended) A process of preparing a compound as claimed in claim 13, comprising,
a) cyclizing a compound of formula (XI) with an appropriate acid, to form a compound of formula (II-k), followed optionally by derivatizing the imidazole moiety, to form a compound of formula (II-a-1)



(XI) (II-k) (II-a-1)

with $Z_1$ being a bivalent radical of formula $-(CH_2)_p-$, wherein p is 1,2,3 or 4; and

b) reacting a tricyclic moiety of formula (XIV) with a reagent of formula (XV) under an inert atmosphere in a reaction inert solvent in the presence of a suitable base, to form a compound of formula (II-l), followed optionally by derivatizing the imidazole moiety to form a compound of formula (II-a-2)



(XIV) (XV) (II-l) (II-a-2)

with $W_5$ being a suitable leaving group, and $Z_2$ being a bivalent radical of formula $-(CH_2)_p-$, or $-CH_2-O-$, wherein p is 1,2,3 or 4.